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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE (2012) AND THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROSPECTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The present territory of the Republic of Moldova was marked over time by Ukrainian policies and influences of various intensities which shaped, partly, the internal and external context of our country both in terms of identity and geopolitics. If we structure these influences, then the first one is forming over time, especially in the context of Russian imperial policies after 1812, of a large Ukrainian community on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, whose presence often conditioned the involvement of the Ukrainian factor in our history. The second was marked by the impact of Ukrainian policies, especially in the Soviet period, in shaping the current territorial and identity construction of the Republic of Moldova, particularly in the design of the MASSR in 1924, the MSSR in 1940 and the Soviet-style "Moldovenism" after 1940. A third dimension of these policies is related to the post-independence perception of Ukraine of the Moldovan statehood both in terms of territorial and border configuration and the influence it exerted in time over the Transnistrian conflict. To all this is added the influence of geographic and implicitly political positioning of Ukraine between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova. And here we refer both to the evolution of Moldovan-Russian relations, and the determination of foreign policy guidelines of our country, particularly between the European integration and the Eurasian integration. All these influences have conferred a major role to the Ukrainian factor in determining Moldovan internal and external policies and

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Moldova's Foreign Policy Statewatch represents a series of brief analyses, written by local and foreign experts, dedicated to the most topical subjects related to the foreign policy of Moldova, major developments in the Black Sea Region, cooperation with international organizations and peace building activities in the region. It aims to create a common platform for discussion and to bring together experts, commentators, officials and diplomats who are concerned with the perspectives of European Integration of Moldova. It is also pertaining to offer to Moldova's diplomats and analysts a valuable tribune for debating the most interesting and controversial points of view that could help Moldova to find its path to EU.

the political situation in Ukraine had and will always have a formative impact on Chisinau policies.

This prompted us to offer a perspective on how the current situation in Ukrainian politics can influence policies in Chisinau and in particular Moldova's European course. The key factors in this context are particularly the parliamentary elections in 2012, but also, by extension, all changes in Ukraine after coming to power of Viktor Yanukovich in 2010. To understand these realities we will proceed with a brief historical review of the most important moments in relations between the two countries, and later, based on these assumptions to be able to highlight the current context and the likelihood of the future influences of the Ukrainian policies on the Republic of Moldova.

Historical context

The territorial enlargement of the Russian Empire was linked not only to the history of the Russian people but also to the historical destiny of Eastern Slavs in general, the three branches (Velykorussians, Malorussians and Belorussians) being considered part of the Russian people, and the imperial spaces colonization was a sustained effort of East Slavic colonization, whose nucleus were the Russians and Ukrainians. As the Russian historian P. Milyukov maintains, the imperial center did not prevent the Ukrainian colonization but, on the contrary, supported it because it did not distinguish between Ukrainians (Malorussians) and Russians (Velykorussians). One result of this colonization was the fact that the territories inhabited by Ukrainians increased twice in size and the current territory of Ukraine is mostly the result of this process. It is worthwhile remembering this because according to the imperial census, already in 1858, Bessarabia was inhabited by 120 thousand Ukrainians (13% of the province population) and, in 1897, the Ukrainians became the second constituent nationality of the province (380,000) or 20% of the population.

This reality explains why in the unstable context of the years 1917-1918 the Central Rada in Kiev laid claim to Bessarabia requiring its incorporation into Ukraine. Between the option of "Ukrainization" and the danger of "Bolshevization" the Romanian political class, on both sides of the Prut, chose the unification of Bessarabia with Romania in 1918.

The Soviet period is even more spectacular from this point of view, because as the American historian D. Laitin mentioned, the Ukrainians were a favored nation in the USSR with a direct access of elites to determining and shaping Soviet policies. The collaboration of the Ukrainians with the Russians, in those days, explains why the first were the main beneficiaries in terms of territorial extension (Western Ukraine, Bukovina, the South of Bessarabia, and Crimea). Thanks to this collaboration, in the context of discussions on the creation of the MASSR in 1924 triumphed "the Ukrainian line" by Grinstein, Badeev and Skrypnik that advocated for the "moldovenization" of the MASSR and not the line of the Romanian "kominternians" advocating for the "Romanization" of the future republic. Under the guidance of the Ukrainian Communists took place the "invention" of the "Moldovan language" in the MASSR and its export to Bessarabia after 1940. No wonder that after the 1940 Soviet ultimatum, Bessarabia was claimed to Romania based on the Ukrainian majority character of the province, and the land of Hertsa, northern and southern Bessarabia were annexed to the Soviet Ukraine. Documents of the time show that N.S. Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Ukrainian SSR, proposed to the CC of the CPSU that the MSSR to be created by unification "**... just of the Moldovan population**" and not by merging the territory of Bessarabia and that of the Moldovan ASSR, as originally planned in Moscow. After 1940, and especially after 1944, the Soviet Ukrainian legislation was extended over the MSSR while the Ukrainian Communists exercised some kind of protectorate over the Republic, being responsible for implementing Moscow policies in Bessarabia. Of the ten first secretaries of the MSSR eight were either Ukrainians or Moldovans born in Ukraine, while the Ukrainian political elite, as writes Ch King, alongside the Russian one, dominated in the MSSR in terms of political and economic power until the late 1980s. We may conclude that although part of the Soviet totalitarian system, the Ukrainian Communist lobby had a great influence on decisions in Moscow modeling the present Ukraine territorial boundary after the patterns of classical nationalism that will mark subsequently Kiev perception of its neighbors, including the Republic of Moldova.

Post-independence projections

Part of the CIS and apparently placed in a neo-Soviet construction run by Moscow, in the post-Soviet times we notice numerous moments in relations between the two countries that witness about a historical continuity in the Ukraine policies towards the Moldovan state. On border issues, even if they signed an agreement on the delimitation already in 1999, the two countries have not completed the demarcation yet, among them there are many animosities caused by the exchange of territories in Giurgiulesti, Basarabeasca and Palanca areas (instead of 7 km of motorway in the Palanca area, Ukraine was to cede 100 m of land for the construction of the Giurgiulesti terminal on the Danube); still remains unfinished the border demarcation on northern areas - the plant in Novo Dnestrovsk, in the South - Giurgiulesti port region and in the eastern region of the Republic of Moldova of 452 km.

As for the Transnistrian issue the complicity of Ukrainians is well known both in its active phase, when the Ukrainian territory was strolled by all kinds of paramilitary armies or Cossacks and later by tolerating the economic axis Odessa-Tiraspol which allowed the separatist regime survival. Subsequently, in different circumstances (as it was in 2004), Ukraine decided unilaterally to modify the export and transit procedures at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. After charges of smuggling tolerance in the Transnistrian region, coming from the Republic of Moldova that was struggling to enclose economically the Tiraspol regime, Ukraine threatened, in 2004, that it will require economic compensation from the Republic of Moldova for losses caused by the economic blockade.

To this are added other litigations such as the energy problem, the plant in Novo-Dnestrovsk, properties issues (by the agreement of 2006, Ukraine recognized that Moldova had the ownership right only over 47 of the 108 entities on its territory), the issue of citizenship that Ukraine offers Moldovan citizens on both sides of the Dniester (Ukraine has a single citizenship and granting it automatically leads to the loss of the Moldovan citizenship). In addition, Ukraine is reluctant to the rapprochement between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, looks with nervousness at the tendencies of "Romanization" of the Republic of Moldova and supports the "moldovenism" in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, logical issues from the standpoint of the interests of Ukraine. The explicit enunciation of the Romanian character of the Republic of Moldova and a unity of interests of Chisinau and Bucharest, including in terms of integration of Transnistria are viewed with concern in Kiev from the perspective of increased pressures they would generate on its territorial integrity and identity.

Ukrainian elections stake in designing the European future of the Republic of Moldova

After a thorough analysis of the evolution of the Ukrainian policies towards the Republic of Moldova after 1991, we can notice that the only period when Ukraine had loyal policies, in accordance with the European patterns, towards the Republic of Moldova interests as a state, was that of 2004-2010, when occurred a change generated by the Orange Revolution, which stimulated a rapprochement to the European Union and NATO. Ukraine abandoned then the multi-vector policy and integration processes in the CIS, by choosing overtly to enter the Euro-Atlantic club, Kiev became a center of political gravity in the region, an alternative to Russia and supported by the West, Ukrainian diplomacy declared clearly its interests in Transnistria and the Caucasus, aspiring to become a mediator between the EU and post-Soviet space.

Moldova has fully felt the advantages of democratization and Europeanization of Ukraine after 2004: the Transnistrian border dispute found a temporary solution through the involvement of the EU which intervenes in 2005 by establishing the Assistance Mission on the border between the two countries (EUBAM); Ukraine became an active mediator in the reformatted negotiation "5 plus 2" format; the Ukrainian President V. Yushchenko submitted in 2005 a plan for the Transnistrian conflict settlement (the Yushchenko plan), that will serve as reference to adopt a draft law on the basic provisions of the legal status for the left bank localities, and for those two appeals on the democratization and demilitarization of the region; the two countries have experienced a new dimension of cross-border cooperation by means of European funds,

particularly through the European projects for the Euro regions (such as "Lower Danube") which provided a new framework for cooperation for the three states: Romania, Ukraine and Moldova.

After the return to power of the Party of Regions and victory of V. Yanukovych at the presidential elections in 2010, the European and Euro-Atlantic course of Ukraine was strongly distorted and the attempts of authorities in Kiev to convince Western partners about keeping the European integration direction are viewed with suspicion in Brussels. Restoring the Russian influence, a hasty signing of a treaty extending the Russian military stationing until 2045, restoration of authoritarian leading practices, restrictions on freedom of expression, intimidation of political opposition, even to the arrest of leaders, the use of state administrative resources and tools for securing political power, pressures on traders in order to determine the isolation of opposition political forces are just some of the manifestations of these changes produced after 2010.

The short period of democratization and westernization of Ukraine and also the reversal of policies for a return to past practices of external orientation and internal modeling, demonstrate that our only chance of political survival is keeping the European integration course and continuing the process of internal reform. The Ukrainian lesson must show our political class and the Moldovan society what are the risks of the lack of responsibility when we talk about major changes in societies with low political culture and likely to be easily manipulated by Russia policies. On the other hand, for our country the outcome of the situation in Ukraine is very important, particularly as a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections, because a total return to Eurasian dimensions in Kiev will complicate the Republic of Moldova European course. Yushchenko period showed that a European, free and democratic Ukraine is the only chance for regional stability and containment of Russia increased pressure on European post-Soviet space, implicitly on the Republic of Moldova. The possibility of return of democratic forces to the Ukrainian parliament (Central Rada) following the 2012 elections is an important moment of reversal of Ukrainian policies and may be the beginning of resizing Ukraine's European policy, a beginning of counteracting practices and policies initiated by the Party of Regions after 2010 and of breaking away from the Russian domination.

The past historical experience shows that maintaining Ukraine in the sphere of influence of Russia directly affects not only the Ukrainian domestic political context, by imitating authoritarian forms of leadership, but also influences directly, in a negative way, as we have seen before, Ukraine foreign practices and attitudes. Only in a European context marked by the principles of historical reconciliation, spiritualization of borders, functionality of international and national laws with respect for the independence and sovereignty of member states, the Republic of Moldova may have normal relations with Ukraine, which would be based on respect for mutual interests. In any other circumstances, the future of these relations will be marked by uncertainty and major risks for our state, both in terms of internal development and general regional context.



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